

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – October 22, 2013 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

Present: Marjorie Cramer, Bill Darrin, Joe Hovious and Mary Gaudet-Wilson; **Absent:** Ann Astarita;
Staff Present: Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning and Land Use and Tammy Hazen, Clerk;
Other Present: Steve Gogliettino, newest member of the commission.

These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

CORRESPONDENCE – Ms. Cramer discussed the letter from Lynn Hallquist on Mile Hill Road South regarding Japanese Knotweed on and adjacent to her property. She is currently working on removing the invasive but said the land adjacent is probably owned by the State.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Hovious motioned to approve the minutes of October 7, 2013. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion. In the last paragraph on the first page, change “conversation” to “conservation”. Ms. Cramer abstained.

Newest Member of the commission, Steve Gogliettino, was welcomed to the commission. He provided a little background of why he is interest in joining the commission.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of Other Commissions – Ms. Cramer attended the Board of Selectmen where the POCD was presented by Mr. Benson and Ms. Dean. Comments from selectmen were supportive but brief. Mr. Hovious discussed Parks and Rec’s minutes. He was concerned over plans for trails at Fairfield Hills. Mr. Sibley said the plans from 2009 is being presented for the CIP. Ms. Wilson said Legislative Council approved the POCD. Mr. Hovious said there is a forestry permit coming up for Inland Wetlands.

Task List – Tabled.

Open Position – Ms. Wilson said there is still one open position.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills

1. Meadows Initiative / Management Plan, Bike Race, etc. – Ms. Wilson said the management plan was sent out to the wetlands commission and Land Use. She received a call regarding a possible mountain bike event to be held on the high meadow in December which the First Selectman approved. If there is damage to the fields it will be fixed. The commissioners will set up a meeting with Ms. Llodra.
2. Revised FFH Document – No update.
3. Corn Fields – No update.
4. Trails at Fairfield Hills – Ms. Wilson said that some commissioners walked the high meadow where wetlands were found. They also found a cistern and well-head. They discussed a trail that Mr. Sibley said was shown as an active road in a 1935 photograph.

Conservation Easements – Mr. Hovious provided an updated list of conversation easements. The list is approximately 50% complete. The commission’s goal is to find out the percentage of land considered easements. Mr. Sibley will print a town-wide map showing all the easements highlighted.

Meadow on 38-9-34 Riverside Road – Ms. Wilson opened discussion. The commissioners discussed whether the firehouse will use this field as a parking lot for the lobster fest. Mr. Sibley said he believes it was only used this past year. Those commissioners who have not walked it were encouraged to do so. It will be included in the open space inventory.

Sherman Woods Subdivision – Mr. Hovious and Ms. Wilson attended the Inland Wetlands meeting. Mr. Hovious asked about impervious surfaces and wetlands on this property. The applicant will return with information at the next public meeting on October 23rd.

Farmland Preservation – Mr. Hovious provided some background on this and said Guy Peterson from the NFA is sending a letter to legislators and will speak with the First Selectman. The commission are in support.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee –Ms. Hazen will finish updating the spreadsheet and filing the maps into the open space files. The commissioners will meet on November 6th at 9am to work on consolidating the open space properties.

Education Subcommittee

1. Development of Website – Ms. Wilson asked if the software can be given to the high school. Mr. Sibley will roll something out to the commission as a beta project. An update will be provided at December meeting.

Invasives Subcommittee

1. Invasives at Fairfield Hills (Japanese Knotweed) – Dan Holmes will complete the removal of the Japanese Knotweed in the next growing season.
2. Bamboo – Ms. Wilson received a call about bamboo on Lafayette trail. There is open space on the back of the property and the Bamboo is pushing up the driveway. The neighbors are negotiating. Ms. Wilson felt the town should oversee it since it is also on a town drainage easement.

Al’s Trail – Mr. Hovious discussed a conversation he and Pat Barkman had with Mr. Gadbut. The property needs to be marked and the trail needs to be cleaned up. Mr. Gadbut’s attorney is looking into potential liability, they need trail language for the easement. Mr. Sibley will look for the language and will ask CCA to mark the area.

POCD – Ms. Wilson discussed the goals and strategies for the POCD.

Pole Bridge Preserve Brochure – Mr. Sibley will provide a map for the brochure. CCA has been marking the area.

STAFF REPORT – Mr. Sibley received approval for a DOT firm to build the parking area off Rte 34. They need to apply for a curb cut permit. It may be completed this winter and will provide parking for three cars. Mr. Sibley discussed open space access off Oakview to connect with Al’s Trail with a possible bridge.

Mr. Hovious motioned to go into executive session at 9:30 pm. Mr. Darrin then seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen